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NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR CHANGING MEN/WASHINGTON, D.C.

STOLEN GLANCES/LOST LOVE

by Gerry Sütter

Male Patterns of Confrontation With Women

It was Paris in the spring. I was bouncing along suburban streets, enjoying an unexpected day off with a North African co-worker. My friend, Marcel, stuck his head out the window and yelled at a girl: "Hey, you babe, you with the beautiful blue eyes." At first I tried to ignore him, to ignore his excited observations about the women's anatomy, jokes, sneers. And as is often the case when you ignore oppressive behavior, it increases. This was my first lesson.

I didn't want to complain. However, I wanted less to listen to Marcel ogle at women and watch the responses of the women he hassled. So I asked him: "Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why do you say that to women?"

"Oh, they love it," he answered.

"Really?" I said, but before I could get him to look at his behavior, he proceeded to tell me about his girl friend in Lebanon. Of his true love, how enduring the trust, how she would be his wife for life and he, father to their children. He showed me her picture.

My second lesson for the day was that when you call someone on stupid behavior, they don't pretend to justify it. More often they change the subject to one that is real, such as where they have been hurt or how they love well. Something besides their thoughtless idiocy.

My third lesson was to work out the paradox of reconciling Marcel's deprecating behavior toward women on the street on the one hand and on the other how he put those close to him (mother, lover) on a pedestal. It seemed contradictory. I was confused because the chivalry of Marcel's response appeared both validating and solidly rooted in a thousand years of Western history. But I realized that what he was praising was an ideal within himself and had little to do with this other human being. From this point the panorama of objectification opened up. In the first case, since a woman is less than fully human, any attention from a man is a reward, in the logic of the ogler. In the second case, like jewels which are precious but still lack humanness, women deserve to be doted on, pampered, guided, and controlled.

Marcel and I had some time to kill, so we went over to his house for lunch. I was warmly greeted by

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STOLEN GLANCES *(continued)*

Marcel's father and was ushered into the dining room. The food was brought in large bowls, and we were given silverware but no plates. We all ate out of the common bowls. What stunned me was that there was no eye contact with women; in fact, they were not even introduced. It was merely pointed out: "That's my sister, and that's my mother." I remember a young girl who was gazing at us being scooted out of the room. I am really not competent to make a statement about North African sexism except to observe that it is qualitatively different than the way men and women get along in the U.S.A. My fifth lesson of the day was that sexism is very distinct, depending upon the culture and the family.

Benefits Of Men Finding Parity In Interactions

So now I want to return my attention to the culture I would like to affect with change: our own. This article is about stolen glances. This is a term that women have come up with to describe literally the activities of Peeping Toms, but more broadly the male pattern of "checking out" or "looking over" women. This article is for men on why men benefit from eliminating the slander in our eyes.

The first benefit is that men will be able relate to "together women." We need self-confident females who are bold in the wide world if we are to ever have a just society or unrigid children. If we want satisfying love relationships, we need women who are free to choose whom they want to love. We men who want intimate relationships with women will not benefit by having paranoid females who are looking for escape passages every time a man is in the same hallway or street. This is what it is like for many women who are hassled by men.

Women do not enjoy being "looked over" like a piece of meat any more than men in prison enjoy being looked over by other men in prison. Let us cease the euphemisms; in either case the process of "looking over" expresses subjugation. Like rape, it has nothing to do with sex. It communicates domination. Hence it fosters oppression.

There are two other benefits that relate directly to men. First is that disrespect is not attractive and doesn't work. It is a testimony to the existence of rigid, patterned behavior that men keep acting like gurgling puppeteers despite the fact that it doesn't work. There are some environments, such as frat

houses or some bars, where distressed behavior is accepted as normal, but disrespect detracts from all human beings. Being hassled is universally abhorred by women.

The second reason is that since men are mainly good and just, we sell our humanity short by acting in mean and hurtful ways. Call it Karma, or "doing unto others as you would have them do unto you." Verbally harassing women, looking at them on the sly, wearing manipulating grins put down women, and by definition is hurtful. The only place that humans mistreat each other is where we have been hurt, or witnessed hurt, and our distress sticks us in a rut. This is not the birthright that is going to pull us out of the nuclear murk, the drug morass, the ecological swampland that bogs us down in the twentieth century. The good news is that we just need to start somewhere, and everything else will change in a life-affirming direction. What better place to start than in our relationships with women?

Etiquette in Men Greeting Women

Let me wear the mantle of Mr. Manners. One of the main problems that surrounds sexism is that no one really knows the rules. Consequently it is no surprise that anarchy seems to rule.

Rule #1: Reclaim your beautiful male face. Be the one to control your expression. Don't let your hurt and insecurity dictate how you look at people. The dull stares of street chums reflect dullness. The sneers and guffaws of dudes show boredom and what trips have been laid on them. Look in a mirror. Be conscious of what your face is doing every minute.

Rule #2: Be direct. Greet everyone like a peer. I jog, and have a real curiosity about watching both men and women run. When I am running I have no problem greeting other runners who pass. But when I am in a car, I notice that women joggers always look away, conspicuously. But then I thought to validate with a gesture. When runners glance, I either give a fist in a low power symbol, or put up my hand in the flick of a wave. I find they often return smiles and waves. Brief encounters are a pleasure. They work better with respect.

Rule #3: Give each other plenty of space. Understand whenever a woman (or man) doesn't respond. Anthropologists have shown that space is something not that we move through but that we carry with us. In cities we need room to feel alone. It is essential that each of us has solitude when we choose.

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STOLEN GLANCES *(continued)*

Rule # 4: Respect everyone. If you find yourself looking at a stranger in a way you would not look at your friend's mother, it is probably a sexist pattern. Every stranger deserves respect until his or her behavior shows otherwise. Being obnoxious is a way of distancing, not of endearing. Enjoy every human being, but don't cheapen the gift by laying your manipulation on others without cause.

Going After the World

The problem with my admonishing you, gentle reader, is that I am preaching to the choir. Most of the members of NOCM-DC are enlightened about sexist behavior. It gets juicy for us all, however, when we commit to ending sexism in the wide world. For those of us who want to eliminate gross indignity from our environment, herewith are some suggestions about contradicting the sexist behavior of others.

Don't Laugh: No matter how unsafe you feel, you can refuse to laugh at the joke that is tasteless. You don't have to say, "I know what you mean," or whatever verbal stroking you give people when you want them to know you are following them. Don't validate stupidity.

The Socratic Approach: The most powerful technique for getting people to change their ways of doing things is to listen. Take seriously their most frivolous comment. "Oh I'm interested, what do you mean by that?" "Really? Do you really think so?" "And so what do you think it would be like if everyone believed that?" Just listen. Often enough people will talk themselves out of tastelessness.

Interrupting Lightly: Men, as men, are able to be powerful allies with women. Alas, when women act powerfully it is too often discounted. Women are put on the defensive. However, we are in a very powerful position to defend women. A subtle "lighten up, Harry" will do wonders without wounding any ego. I'm able to do more in work environments by staying light. "That sounds real intelligent. I don't know how I've missed the experience."

Interrupting Anyway: Sometimes, barking "Stop it!" in your loudest, lowest voice is what it takes to get some people's attention. There are places that I tend to get involved in the wide world. Where violence is happening or implied with children or women, I make a habit of intervening. Using the bark of the drill sergeant works in the world.

Network for Justice: Learn how to lobby for what matters. Use the network of friends and co-workers to discuss areas of policy, even in personal behavior situations. A Code of Ethics point thrown out with a couple of people can get the idea passed around an office, and the Karma can change. It is OK to want your environment unpolluted by distress. You sometimes need to be explicit and insist on it.

I suppose there are dangers of being too visible. It stands to reason that the more you succeed, the more you are targeted. Meet slander with self-righteous indignation on your part and that of every friend and supporter you have. If physical threats come from someone you know, respond with a visit from a couple of your most muscled friends.

But take the limit case. If I am targeted and shot, I would happily give my life for justice. I choose my battlefields carefully, and this area of men's harassment of women is one of mine. □

TAI CHI, MEDITATION, AND RELAXATION: A TAOIST TRIP INTO EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS

NOCM-DC's regular First Thursday Meeting on June 4 [7:00 pm sharp at the United Church, 1920 G St., N.W.], which is open to both women and men, will feature yet another nonrational trip into expanded embodied consciousness.

Rob Ciapetta will lead us through the opening movements of the Yang form of Tai Chi Ch'uan, an ancient Chinese group meditation developed by the Bhuddist monks who came to China over five thousand years ago. Intended to expand the Chi, or

healing energy of the body, Tai Chi is a relaxation technique as well as good physical exercise.

Rob will begin with several breathing and stretching activities, share a taped 15 minute deep relaxation and guided meditation experience at midpoint, and close with community sharing and readings from the Tao Te Ching by Lao Tsu, the founder of Taoism.

Rob has studied, practiced, and taught Tai Chi for over five years in the Washington area. He teaches reading and writing at Montgomery College. □

APPRECIATING YOUR UNIQUENESS: An Encounter With Larry Brown

Larry Brown: Have you ever considered yourself as an artistic masterpiece? Consider, if you will, the character and physical composition of your body's structure. It makes no difference if you're large or small, thin or stout; there is an artistic theme to your being. All it takes is a little understanding of the concept of artistic composition, and you can create a very exciting living, moving sculpture with your own body. The process is not only exciting and gratifying for others to watch, but also puts you in touch with a deep, internal source of energy and personal understanding which is non-intellectual.

BrotherBond: What's it all about, Larry?

Larry: The evening is an opportunity to relate personally to your creative interior by attaching it to one of the mundane aspects of life and creating high art out of it. That's what an artist does. I'm going to offer people a chance to experience that within the context of themselves, as opposed to superimposing esthetic criteria.

BB: How can I experience myself as a work of art?

Larry: By understanding some of the basic elements of form and dynamics. You don't have to see how fast you can move or how high you can jump in order to do that. Each person will be able to express himself nonverbally to the rest of group as an audience.

BB: How will we do this?

Larry: We will be using various themes and concepts of composition as elements—for example, understanding how the concept of time is a very exciting dynamic in itself.

BB: Is this like doing yoga?

Larry: It's not noticeably yoga, but definitely uses techniques for centering, finding energy, and rejuvenating certain dormant parts of your body.

BB: Why would we get excited?

Larry: From a sense of freedom that is rather primal: giving us an excuse to move into an area of expression that generally is not permitted. We place so much attention on the mind that we really don't have much opportunity to indulge ourselves in our bodies as a form of expression. When you work with kinesthetics, there is something which eludes intellectualization, but exists. You have a gut way of

knowing what is beautiful, why some form is pleasing and some form is not. And if you want something to be ugly, you know just exactly how and what ugly is. But it's not something you can describe.

BB: Why would we get scared?

Larry: Almost for the same reason. It's scary to be set free. It's the unknown. And also peer approval.

BB: How are we going to experience transformation?

Larry: If we are transformed, it will be a byproduct; it won't be intentional. Perhaps you may just think of yourself, physically, as having much more value as a human being, and appreciate your uniqueness as an expression of...[pause]

BB: Personal integrity?

Larry: Yes, in the sense of integrating the various facets of your being. Appreciating one of these facets that has been lying dormant will enhance the rest of you. All the rest will glow brighter, since they are all connected.

Larry is a management consultant who formerly danced professionally, studying technique and dance composition with the Joffrey Ballet, Merce Cunningham, Wolf Trap Academy, The Dance Project, and others. More recently he has devoted his energy to Hatha and Siddha Yoga, which he has taught privately and through the YWCA. □

JULY MEETING: WO/MEN IN MOTION— WORKS OF ART

If you think you would enjoy an adventure into the movement of your own body as a dynamic artistic expression, don't miss this special evening with Larry Brown!

On May 7 Larry led NOCM-DC's regular First Thursday Meeting. After this incredible evening, we invited him back to "do it again" in July! Open to both women and men, this special event on Thursday, July 2, starts at 7:00 pm sharp at the United Church, 1920 G St., N.W. Wear exercise clothing. □

SOLUTIONS RATHER THAN RECRIMINATIONS

[Editor's Note: The Washington Post, with its usual marvelously sensitive coverage of emerging trends in the evolution of human consciousness, took a recent shot at the "Post-Feminist Male" in the Sunday Outlook Section. Many of our readers were outraged, no doubt, and cancelled their subscriptions forthwith. JACK STRATON, one of our members, noting The Post's narrow range of informed opinion quoted on this topic, submitted the following response for publication.]

Curt Suplee's commentary (*The Washington Post* 5/3/87) observes of his "Post-Feminist Male": "Stripped of dominance, he lost his will; ordered to be caring, he became obeisant." He cites Dan Logan's suggestion that "We may have to take a step back in order to move forward," and Logan's assertion that "The traditional façade is still in place. It's a phony façade. But for now...that's the best solution."

It is true that equal opportunity for women (the essence of Feminism) requires men to relinquish

domineering roles. It is true that some men are foundering in a lack of self-image, now that they are no longer bulldozing their way through life. But calling for a return to oppressive roles (returning to one extreme because another extreme doesn't work) shows a profound lack of imagination and understanding. It is the façades, themselves, that are the problem. Those who stop mistaking the surface personality for the human being and those who rid themselves of the fear of communicating become free to truly love each other and to allow creativity to replace the rigid roles of wimp or controller.

Suplee notes that men in bars seem timid, lacking in "predation." He quotes one woman's complaint that "Back in the 70's, a dozen guys would *hit on me* in one night," and that now opening lines are a variant of "gee-whiz." (Please note the italicized rape terminology of the old roles.) The middle way lies in teaching communication and instilling courage. We pride ourselves on being the species that can communicate through language, but in a bar it would be very hard to prove it. The sky doesn't fall if one is direct: "I find you very attractive. May I talk with you for a bit?" (Please note that directness is different from rudeness: "Hey baby, nice tits. You wanna' fool around?")

What men need, and what this Rambo-philic society as a whole needs, is to understand that a sense of strength comes not from power over others but as a result of power from within. Oppressive, exploitive power may provide things, but it will not fill one's life nor fulfill one's dreams. One cannot take real power from others, nor is it granted by authority. True power includes the grace to accept the right of others to work their will, to accept that we sometimes lose, and to know that as each of us comes into our own power, the power of all of us grows. To be powerful is to take charge of our lives, to embrace personal integrity, courage, and wholeness. True power is rooted in centeredness; true strength in a loving self-image. And it is through compassion, awareness, and creativity that one can manifest true passion. Thus, rather than seeking to steal men's power, Feminism seeks to deepen our sense of personal power so that we need not sap women's power.

Jack Straton is founder and former director of Eugene (Oregon) Men Against Rape and is a member of D.C. Men Against Rape. □

MEN CAMPING AS BROTHERS

Participants in the Men As Brothers Workshop on March 1 are organizing a weekend camping trip on May 29-31. We plan to leave Friday afternoon for a campsite within two hours of D.C. Some men may prefer to join us on Saturday morning.

We will explore brotherhood and evoke a sense of sharing. This is a chance to let go and play, and an opportunity to deepen the experience of community that has developed in the Workshop and several Men's Council meetings. We want to invite other men to experience the growing awareness of bonding and intimacy that we have begun to build as brothers.

We will experience the power of nonrational activity in creating community: games, campfires, hiking, cooking, musicmaking, Tai Chi in the woods, ritual, storytelling, psychophysical exercises, and the fun of just being together in a rustic environment.

Call Rob Ciapetta at 424-8055 after May 10 for details. Cost: the bare minimum to cover expenses. We will finalize our planning together on Thursday night, May 28. □

MEN AND MASCULINITY CONFERENCE TWELVE

Many of our members will be attending the Men and Masculinity Conference at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, June 25-27.

Our group owes its inception to the Men and Masculinity Conference that was held in D.C. several years ago. Consequently many of us know the kind of experience that this can be: lots of men (and some women too) who care a lot about meeting each other and sharing on a candid level the gift of their humanity. There will be workshops, support groups, singing, poetry reading, dancing. There will be deep meaningful conversations over lunch—male power and silliness as well. If you haven't already chosen to go, I urge you to consider it.

If you want more information about the Conference, or to join the number of us who are already planning to attend, call Gerry Sütter, (703) 573-0611, or write him at 2900 Rogers Drive, Falls Church, VA 22042. □

E.T. PHONE HOME

Flash! NOCM's resident mad government-funded cosmologist (NOT cosmetologist!) and anti-rape activist reports that his favorite Quark Theory, Quantum Chromodynamics (this is for real, folks!), has inspired the creation of a revolutionary way to use Ma Bell's obsolete technology to link human consciousness in a non-hierarchical information network. The uniquely redundant flowpath of this computerized model enables any member to initiate rapid information flow across the network.

Translation: Would you like be plugged in to the real inside stuff? Getting calls from your friends with up-to-the-minute info on NOCM and men's activities sounds irresistible. Who wouldn't want to know?

Possibly YOU could be selected to receive a phone call inviting you to join our phone net! Your only responsibility would be to call three people in turn. If you suspect you're already missing out on too much, you may be right! Don't wait by the phone. For immediate access, simply pick it up and leave a message at:

(202) 362-0032

N O C M PRINCIPLES

The National Organization for Changing Men is an organization supporting men as they undergo the process of change so evident in men's lives today. NOCM reflects a pro-feminist and gay-affirmative perspective, is open to men and women, and is committed to a broad goal of social and personal change.

We believe that the great changes now taking place in the roles and opportunities of women and men will be positive for both men and women. By questioning the old rules of masculinity, which came along with the assumption of male superiority, men have the opportunity to be freer, happier, and more fulfilled as human beings. Traditional masculinity includes positive qualities in which we take pride and find strength (independence, courage, self-reliance, etc.), but also contains qualities which have limited and harmed us: excessive involvement with work, isolation from our children, discomfort in expressing emotions, lack of close friendships, excessive competitiveness and aggressiveness. We believe that men can help one another unlearn the traditional masculine lessons that have limited our options and caused so many problems for ourselves and others.

As an organization for changing men, we strongly support the continuing struggle of women for full equality. We acknowledge the insights and positive social changes that feminism has stimulated in our society for both women and men. We oppose such injustices to women as economic and legal discrimination, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and many others. We also support reform of policies that may affect men unfairly, such as child custody laws. Women and men can and should work together as allies to change the injustices that have so often made men and women see one another as enemies.

One of the strongest and deepest anxieties of most American men is their fear of homosexuality. This "homophobia" is a major cause of exaggerated masculine behavior. It is a debilitating burden to heterosexual men and contributes directly to the many injustices experienced by gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons. We call for an end to all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation and for the creation of a gay-affirmative society.

We acknowledge, too, that many people are victimized today because of their race, social class, age, religion, and physical condition. We believe that such injustices are vitally connected to patriarchy, with its fundamental premise of the unequal distribution of power. Our goal is to change not just ourselves or other men as individuals, but the society as a whole, including institutions which perpetuate inequality.

We welcome to NOCM any person who agrees in substance with these principles. □

MAY/JUNE NOCM-DC CALENDAR

SUNDAYS	MONDAYS	THURSDAYS	WEEKENDS
May 17	May 4	May 7	May 29-31
Potluck Dinner/ Steering Committee 5:00 pm Sharp!	Men Against Rape 7:30 pm	NOCM-DC Meeting 7:00 pm Sharp!	CAMPING TRIP
Men's Council Frederick, MD 5:00 pm	May 11	Wo/Men in Motion/ Works of Art	FOR
June 21	Men Against Rape 7:30 pm	June 4	MEN AS BROTHERS
Potluck Dinner/ Steering Committee 5:00 pm Sharp!	May 18	NOCM-DC Meeting 7:00 pm Sharp!	June 25-27
	Men Against Rape 7:00 pm (call)	Tai Chi, Meditation, and Relaxation	MEN AND MASCULINITY CONFERENCE #12
	May 25		Trinity College Hartford, CT (Thurs-Sat)
	Men Against Rape 7:30 pm		

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS:

WHY MEN ARE THE WAY THEY ARE. Dr. Warren Farrell's Learning Annex Course #981 Section A. Wednesday, June 17, 6:30-9:30 pm. Fee: \$18. Info: 966-9606.

SEXUAL SECRETS OF THE ORIENT. Ancient Chinese, Indian, and modern Western ultra-orgasmic techniques. Dr. Alex Gross' Learning Annex Course #393. Fee: \$32. Thursday, June 18, 6-10 pm. Info: 966-9606.

MEN AND MASCULINITY CONFERENCE #12. Thursday-Saturday, June 25-27, at Trinity College, Hartford, CT. Open to women and men. Info: Gerry at 573-0611.

WHERE TO GO, WHOM TO CALL:

NOCM-DC meets monthly on the first Thursday at 7:00 pm sharp at The United Church, 1920 G St, N.W. Open to women. Info: Gerry at 573-0611.

NOCM-DC's Steering Committee hosts a monthly Sunday Potluck Dinner and support group for men at 5:00 pm sharp at 3001 Veazey Terrace, N.W. #226. Info: 362-0032.

MEN AGAINST RAPE, a group of men and women, holds Monday meetings weekly at 7:30 pm at 3001 Veazey Terrace, N.W. #226. Info: 362-0032.

MEN AS BROTHERS group holds evening Men's Councils and weekend activities. Info: Rob at 424-7055.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!

• Do you want to continue to get this newsletter? Please check your mailing label and return it with this form to NOCM-DC, P.O. Box 1011, Falls Church VA 22041 so we'll know it's correct and getting to you. Please note your home/business phone numbers (this list is kept **strictly** confidential, for use by NOCM-DC only, subject to any requested restrictions.)

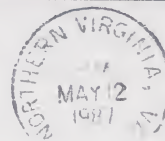
• To help pay for postage and supplies, please send \$10.00 if you can. If you can't right now, please return the mailing labels anyway. If enough friends send \$10.00 (or more if you can afford it), the newsletter should come to you regularly during the next year.

• Are you a member of national NOCM? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Send information

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